



**FAIR TRADE
COLLEGES &
UNIVERSITIES**

Campaigners Guide:

Passing a Procurement Policy on Your Campus

Getting Started

Welcome to the world of procurement! This resource will help you understand how institutions purchase goods and how you can work with your administration to support producers through the purchasing of Fair Trade. Institutions of higher education purchase large volumes of products, leveraging this purchasing has the potential to create a world of change for farmers and workers around the globe.

First things first – Fair Trade Campaigns is here to help! Please keep in touch with us throughout this project so we can offer support. Second, be strategic about who from your team manages this project. Many officials have little time on their hands, so ensure the team member tackling this issue understands the inner workings of the administration and is timely and thorough with correspondence.

Knowledge is key to facilitating change. Prepare yourself with a good understanding of current purchasing and existing policies to increase your chances for success with busy purchasing officials.

Sections:

1. **Procurement Policy Basics**
2. **Research Existing Related Policies**
3. **Cultivating Relationships with College and University Officials**
4. **Glossary: Helpful Terms to Know**

1. Procurement Policy Basics

What is a Purchasing Policy (Procurement = Purchasing)?

Procurement means to purchase, and institutions spend lots of money purchasing goods and services – from paperclips to buses. They buy food for dining facilities, cafés, offices and more. Purchasing policies dictate what they can buy. Policies might specify USDA Grade “A” meat for health reasons, or fuel-efficient vehicles for environmental and financial reasons. Purchasing policies are a great way to steer institutional dollars toward products that meet their needs AND promote the public good.

What Would a Fair Trade Purchasing Policy Do?

A fair trade purchasing policy would require that an institution purchase fair trade varieties of basic products – coffee, tea, sugar, cocoa, etc. – that are available with a fair trade label. This would mean that with every purchase, the institution was supporting the mission of fair trade, and creating a large new market for fair trade goods. Institutions buy in huge quantities – which could mean a lot of new fair trade purchasing in one place. **Working to pass a fair trade purchasing policy is a great way to advance the fair trade movement and values that you care about. This Guide will walk you through getting started on your own policy campaign!**

How YOU Can Help Pass a Fair Trade Purchasing Policy

A good way to start off is by garnering the ingredients of any good campaign: **people** and **knowledge**.

People: A strong Fair Trade Committee can help show decision-makers evidence of wide support for fair trade purchasing. You also want to get those decision-makers on your side.

Knowledge: Does your institution directly buy coffee, tea, sugar, and other products that are widely available in fair trade varieties? Does your institution contract with a Food Service Provider or provide all of its own services as a self-operated entity?

2. Research Existing Policies

Before you advocate for new policies, it's helpful to know what is already in place that could help pave the way for fair trade purchasing. Find out all you can about existing resolutions, policies, or any other way that your institution has shown support for fair-trade-related issues. Think broadly! Fair Trade purchasing could be promoted from the standpoint of labor rights, fair wages, "green" purchasing, and more (look at list below).

Strategies:

- A. Internet Keyword Search
- B. Find Related Offices/Committees and Explore How They Advise Purchasing Decisions

Things to Consider:

- Internet searches may turn up old information, but unless a policy has been actively revoked, it's probably still in effect.
- Live people and internet searches are likely to give you different information. Use that to your advantage by trying both.

A. Internet Keyword Searches:

Do a thorough internet search for the name of your institution and these keywords using Google, Bing, and your institution's web site to help you find existing policies and/or the right department or contact to help you get a policy passed.

[Your Institution's Name] and [Keyword], or
[Your Institution's Name] Policy [Keyword]

Use these keywords:

Labor	Conservation
Wages	Trafficking
Green	Responsible
Environment/environmental	Fair Trade
Sustainability/sustainable	Think of more!

B. Finding Related Offices/Committees and Explore How They Advise Purchasing Decisions

Look through a college or university directory to see if there's an office of sustainability, purchasing, or issues related to the public good. Giving a quick call to that office and asking about related policies is a great way to get up-to-date information from a live person.

Find a committee on campus to sit on that relates to Fair Trade, like sustainability or dining services. This will give you an insider's look at how the institution works. You may also be able to contribute to implementation – making sure the purchasers follow through with the policy.

3. Cultivating Relationships with College/University Officials

Power is in relationships. Here are a few pointers to ensure success:

- a. ***Make use of existing relationships*** – Talk with professors, administrators and staff you know to see if they can help introduce you to the right person on campus to get things moving in a positive direction.
- b. ***Stay Current*** – Find out *before your meeting* how Fair Trade relates to their current work. At the meeting, you can thank them for any past support of related issues, such as sustainability. Take note if they inhabit a role with special clout, such as chair of an important committee.
- c. ***Communicate Professionally*** – Thoroughly review correspondence. Be prompt and positive.
- d. Prepare appropriate materials for meetings.
- e. ***Anticipate questions*** – and formulate responses ahead of time.
- f. ***Think from Their Perspective*** – Before you head into a meeting, think about the impact of the policy, and why your contact would want to support it. (Ex: First University in your area to have a Fair Trade Policy, contributing to your institution's commitment to social justice).
- g. Always recognize people's efforts!

4. Procurement Terminology:

Award – a process in which an institution offers to sign a contract with a vendor for goods or services. When a vendor is selected to sign a contract to sell to an institution, that contract is said to be “awarded” to that vendor. Sometimes only one vendor is selected, sometimes multiple vendors receive awards

Bid – an offer from a vendor that wants to provide goods or services at a specific price

Bid Solicitation – a process in which an entity describes the goods or services they'd like to buy

Contract – a document signed by both the institution and the vendor, saying the vendor will sell them goods or services at a specific price (also called a “price agreement”)

Distributor – a type of vendor contracted for delivering goods, such as fresh food, beverages or packaged goods

Food Service Provider – a type of vendor contracted for making, transporting and/or serving prepared food for institutions, restaurants, and anywhere that has concessions

Office Supply Company – a type of vendor contracted for providing and transporting office supplies

Procurement – purchasing (by government agencies or institutions)

Procurement Policy – the rules and regulations that govern the process of acquiring goods or services for a government or institution

Resolutions – A formal expression of opinion made, usually by voting or signed consent.

RFP (Request for Proposal) – a type of bid solicitation

Vendor – a company that sells goods or services to the institution, or wants to do so

Good Luck and always feel free to contact National Organizer Kylie Nealis
knealis@fairtradeusa.org